

## AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A flare pellet assembly for providing at least one of visual and infrared energy output, said flare pellet assembly comprising:
  - at least first and second ignitable flare pellets arranged in a stack;
  - a rod that extends through said first and second ignitable flare pellets;
  - a protrusion ~~associated with~~ on one of said first ignitable flare pellet ~~and said rod~~, and
  - a depression or groove complementarily configured to accommodate said protrusion on ~~associated with~~ another of said first ignitable flare pellet ~~and said rod~~ thereby preventing rotation of said first ignitable flare pellet relative to said rod.
2. (original) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
  - at least one of said first and second ignitable flare pellets comprises a frustum.
3. (original) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
  - at least one of said first and second ignitable flare pellets is substantially disk shaped.
4. (original) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
  - said first and second ignitable flare pellets are substantially identical in size and design.
5. (original) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
  - said first and second ignitable flare pellets are affixed to each other.
6. (original) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising:
  - means for substantially immobilizing said first ignitable flare pellet relative to said second ignitable flare pellet.
7. (canceled)

8. (previously amended) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:  
at least one of said first and second ignitable flare pellets is affixed to said rod.
9. (previously amended) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising:  
means for preventing rotation of said first ignitable flare pellet relative to said rod.
10. (canceled)
11. (previously amended) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:  
said rod comprises a stop at a first end of said rod and a threaded second end of said rod.
12. (original) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 11, further comprising:  
a threaded fastener engaged with said threaded second end of said rod, and wherein  
said first and second ignitable flare pellets are disposed between said stop of said rod  
and said threaded fastener.
13. (currently amended) A pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly for providing at least one of visual  
and infrared energy output, said pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly comprising:  
a plurality of pyrotechnic flare pellets made of at least one ignitable material, wherein  
said plurality of pyrotechnic flare pellets are disposed along a longitudinal reference  
axis; and  
a plurality of tapered grooves defined between each of said plurality of pyrotechnic  
flare pellets, wherein each of said tapered groove tapers toward said longitudinal  
reference axis; and  
a rod that extends through said plurality of flare pellets.
14. (previously amended) A pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 13, wherein:

said plurality of tapered grooves comprises a plurality of interior angles between about 5° and about 35°.

15. (previously amended) A flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 13, wherein:  
said plurality of tapered grooves is annularly disposed about said longitudinal reference axis.

16. (previously amended) A pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising:  
means for substantially immobilizing each of said plurality of flare pellets relative to each other.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) A pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 13 47, further comprising:  
at least one of said plurality of flare pellets is affixed to said rod.

19. (currently amended) A pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly, as claimed in Claim 13 47, further comprising:  
means for preventing rotation of at least one of said flare pellets relative to said rod.

20 through 42 (canceled)

43. (currently amended) A pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly for providing at least one of visual and energy output comprising:  
a plurality of ignitable pyrotechnic flare pellets arranged in a stack;  
a means for ~~permanently~~ joining said stack of said plurality of pellets whereby said stack remains joined upon ejection from a flare launcher;

each of said plurality of pellets having tapered edges whereby the center of each of said plurality of pellets is thicker than the edges of the pellet; and  
a plurality of tapered grooves defined between said tapered edges of said pellets, said plurality of tapered grooves axially aligned with a vertical axis of said stack and disposed about the circumference of said stack.

44. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 43 further comprising:  
said means is a rod that extends through said pellet assembly.
45. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 44 further comprising:  
said means is an adhesive intermediate to said rod and said pellets.
46. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 44 further comprising:  
said means is an adhesive intermediate to said pellets.
47. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 45 further comprising:  
said means is a wrap disposed about said stack of pellets.
48. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 43 further comprising:  
said plurality of pellets are disk shaped.
49. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 43 further comprising:  
said plurality of pellets are shaped in the form of a frustum.
50. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 43 further comprising:  
each of said plurality of tapered grooves having an interior angle of between about 5° and about 35°.
51. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 43 further comprising:  
said plurality of pellets are substantially identical in size and design.

52. (previously added) The pyrotechnic flare pellet assembly of Claim 43 further comprising:  
said plurality of pellets are bi-convex disks.